

Remarks

It is respectfully requested that claims 25 - 47 be reconsidered for allowance in view of this Amendment and these Remarks.

Claim 25 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112 as failing to set forth the subject matter of the invention. Accordingly, claim 25 has been amended to more accurately define the present invention. Amended claim 25 now recites “ ... so that a drive connection between the engine and the rear wheels is purely mechanical”. This is supported by the original specification and drawings which show that the drive connection between the engine 16 and rear wheels 14 is only mechanical, including mechanical drive 18 and axles 12. Withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 25 - 32, 36-47 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Higasa et al. ('806) in view of Kawamura. However, this rejection is respectfully traversed in view of the amendment made to claim 25 herein.

Amended claim 25 now recites “A steering system for a utility vehicle, the vehicle having a front axle, a rear axle, a pair of front wheels, a pair of rear wheels, an internal combustion engine for driving a mechanical drive for driving the rear wheels on the rear axle, so that a drive connection between the engine and the rear wheels is purely mechanical, and a pair of electric drives, each for driving one of the front wheels ...”. Thus, a distinguishing feature of the invention is a vehicle with front wheels driven by electric drives, and with rear wheels driven by a purely mechanical drive connection to the engine.

In contrast, in both Higasa and Kawamura all the wheels are driven by electric motors. There are no wheels which are driven by a purely mechanical drive connection, as recited in amended claim 25. Thus, a combination of both Higasa and Kawamura cannot teach or suggest wheels which are driven by a purely mechanical drive connection, as recited in amended claim 25. Thus, amended claim 25 should be allowed and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Claims 26 - 47 should be allowed because they now depend directly or indirectly from allowable amended claim 25.

In conclusion, it is believed that this application is in condition for allowance, and such allowance is respectfully requested.

Any fees or charges due as a result of filing of the present paper may be charged against Deposit Account 04-0525.

Respectfully,

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